GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2509
ANSWERED ON:30.11.2016
Social Security Agreements with BRICS Nations
Deo Shri Arka Keshari;Reddy,Kotha Prabhakar

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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(a) wether the Government is planning to ink pacts on social security programmes with BRICS nations with a view to ensure more benefits to Indians in BRICS nations;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its likely benefit to Indian workers; and

(c) the number of agreements entered into so far and the number of agreements implemented as on date?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) & (b) The idea to ink pacts on social security programmes with BRICS nations was discussed at the meetings of the BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers held on 9 June 2016 in Geneva and on 27-28 September 2016 in New Delhi respectively. The possibility of concluding social security agreements between BRICS countries also finds mention in the Goa Declaration of the 8th BRICS Leaders' Summit. As a follow up to the Goa Declaration, the Ministry of External Affairs has sent communications to the relevant authorities in all BRICS nations for commencing negotiations on the social security agreements. Brazil has responded favourably and the first round of negotiations will be held in Brasilia on 13-17 March 2017.

Bilateral social security agreements protect the interests of Indian professionals, skilled workers working abroad by providing the following benefits:

â€¢ Avoiding making double social security contributions: Once an SSA is signed between India and a foreign country, it exempts the Indian worker (working on short term contracts abroad) from making a social security contribution in that foreign country. This exemption is provided only if the Indian worker is covered under the social security system of India and continues to pay his/her contribution during the period of overseas contract.

â€¢ Easy remittance of benefits (Exportability): An SSA between India and a foreign country enables the Indian worker/professional to remit his/her accumulated social security contribution made in a foreign country, in case of relocation to India/third country.

â€¢ Aggregating the contribution periods (in two countries) to prevent loss of benefits (Totalization): An SSA allows aggregating residency periods of social security contribution made by the Indian worker / professional in India and the foreign country to qualify for retirement benefits.

(c) India has to date signed and operationalized comprehensive Social Security Agreements or Totalization Agreements with 16 countries. They include Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan, South Korea, Austria, and Australia. We have also signed comprehensive Social Security Agreements with Portugal and the Quebec Province of Canada, both of which are in the process of getting operationalized. A partial / limited Social Security Agreement is in place with Germany.